

# Legislative and Public Affairs

## STRATEGIC PLAN LPA

### Vision

To ensure that APHIS is highly regarded for sound policies and programs and for effective, accurate, timely, and strategic communications.

### Mission

To provide leadership, expertise, and counsel in developing creative, high quality, and timely communications strategies, products, and services that promote APHIS' mission of protecting the health and value of American agriculture and natural resources.

### Values

The following list describes the type of employee and work environment LPA is dedicated to fostering:

#### **Proactive:**

Continually looking for opportunities to promote the APHIS mission with internal and external stakeholders, customers, and partners.

#### **Growing and Learning:**

Creating and embracing challenges through which the unit learns and grows and becomes better able to use the most appropriate tools and expertise for effective and efficient communications and customer service.

#### **Service-Oriented:**

Helping our clients by being responsive, skilled, and knowledgeable.

#### **Honest:**

Providing truthful and objective services and advice to clients and within our own staff, valuing peer review that is done in a professionally constructive and empathetic way.

#### **Well-Rounded:**

Developing individuals into "Big Picture Thinkers" with a broad and diverse set of skills and perspectives.

#### **Persistent and Precise:**

Determinedly pursues projects/issues/information to ensure the most accurate and complete product.

#### **Creative and Entrepreneurial:**

Encouraging individuals to use innovative techniques and tools when creating products or solving problems. Creating a fun work atmosphere where people look forward to coming every day.

#### **Team-Focused:**

Sharing responsibility and learning together, recognizing that program success is the result of collegial and cooperative relationships with others.

#### **Measuring and Rewarding Performance:**

Valuing commitments through a system in which project goals are set, tracked, and monitored, and individuals are rewarded for their high quality products and services.

**GOAL 1:** Provide strategic counsel to Department and Agency officials to ensure well-informed decisionmaking and effective communications. LPA will:

**Objective 1:**

Work proactively to analyze legislation and legislative activities to assess their potential impact on APHIS and work with programs and Congressional staff to achieve desired outcomes for APHIS.

**Objective 2:**

Elevate outstanding and/or emerging issues voiced by stakeholders, the media, Congress, and the public and participate in their resolution.

**Objective 3:**

Liaise with USDA's Offices of Communications, Congressional Relations, and Intergovernmental Affairs, as well as other Departmental offices as appropriate, to ensure that the Secretary's senior staff are briefed on agency activities and decisions and to help ensure that Agency officials are aware of the Secretary's political and communications objectives.

**GOAL 2:** Strategize with agricultural stakeholder groups and cooperators about our respective activities and priorities. LPA will:

**Objective 1:**

Improve procedures and foster relationships to ensure active sharing of information.

**Objective 2:**

Maximize efforts to educate stakeholders on Departmental and Agency communications policies, strategies, and procedures.

**Objective 3:**

Maximize use of communications vehicles like the Agricultural Leaders Letter, stakeholder letters for individual programs, and conference calls.

**GOAL 3:** Strengthen emergency and homeland security preparedness and response capabilities. LPA will:

**Objective 1:**

Create and/or update standard operating procedures, guidance, and other materials for significant animal and plant pests and diseases to be used in the event of an outbreak.

**Objective 2:**

Continue to provide Incident Command System (ICS) training to all LPA staff and familiarize them with the current emergency response plans.

**GOAL 4:** Improve the management and delivery of information and services through creative and responsible stewardship of Agency resources. LPA will:



**GOAL 5:** Build and retain a skilled workforce. LPA will:

**Objective 3:**

Regularly monitor and revise the COOP plan. Actively participate in the Emergency Management Leadership Council and support related national response plans.

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**Objective 1:**

Evaluate current level of responsiveness to all audiences and assess where we need to improve internal processes.

**Objective 2:**

Explore and evaluate how available internal (LPA and APHIS) and external resources could be used to enhance our efficiency, and integrate other organizations' best practices where they are viable and appropriate.

**Objective 3:**

Establish performance goals and monitor progress toward meeting them.

**Objective 4:**

Develop realistic workforce plans and budgets and continually re-evaluate them in light of evolving Agency and LPA needs and overall budget picture.

**Objective 5:**

Establish organizational and individual performance plans and measures that are aligned with the APHIS strategic plan. Regularly evaluate progress against the measures and adjust accordingly.

**Objective 6:**

Expand our use of technology for the management and delivery of information.

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**Objective 1:**

Develop an orientation program for LPA employees on key aspects of LPA and APHIS activities.



**GOAL 6:** Improve internal information sharing within LPA and work to enhance communications and the communications skill set within the broader APHIS community. LPA will:

**Objective 2:**

Develop training plans by profession and encourage employees to pursue additional professional development needs through details, formal training, professional associations, etc. Each employee will develop a learning contract, Individual Development Plan, or similar agreement with their supervisor on an annual basis.

**Objective 3:**

Reward high performance through awards and other recognition programs.

**Objective 4:**

Explore salary parity between LPA employees and similar positions held by employees within other government agencies.

**Objective 5:**

Develop strategic recruitment and succession plans for LPA.

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**Objective 1:**

Improve procedures and foster relationships to increase sharing of information about APHIS program activities within LPA, to better ensure efficient and consistent communications with external customers and stakeholders.

**Objective 2:**

Maximize efforts to educate APHIS program staff on LPA services and Department and Agency communications policies.

**Objective 3:**

Use Inside APHIS to regularly communicate APHIS accomplishments under its strategic plan.

**Objective 4:**

Consult with and provide training to program staff regarding techniques and tools for improving written and oral communications and for compliance with the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act.